

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 069170
ORIGIN NODS-00

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DRAFTED BY EA/K:RGRICH:FLW
APPROVED BY EA - MR. HOLBROOKE
S/S:SVALERGA

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY SEOUL IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 069170

NODIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PGOV, KS, US

SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATIVE EFFORTS TO INTERVIEW
FORMER AMBASSADOR KIM DONG-JO

REF: STATE 63419

1. DURING ROK AMBASSADOR KIM'S CALL ON ASSISTANT
SECRETARY HOLBROOKE MARCH 16 PRIOR TO KIM'S RETURN TO
SEOUL ON CONSULTATIONS, HE ASKED FOR ASSESSMENT OF
CONGRESSIONAL PROSPECTS. WE GAVE KIM OUR FRANK ASSESSMENT
THAT CONGRESSIONAL DILEMMA TS VERY REAL AND ACUTE, AND
THAT WE DO NOT HAVE THE KEY TO UNLOCK THIS SITUATION.
ALTHOUGH THERE IS CONSTRUCTIVE UNDERSTANDING IN KEY
COMMITTEES OF PRESIDENT'S PROGRAM AND NORTHEAST ASIAN
SECURITY ISSUES, THE INABILITY OF THE ETHICS COMMITTEES
SATISFACTORILY TO RESOLVE THEIR INVESTIGATIONS FROM THEIR
POINT OF VIEW LEFT ENTIRE CONGRESS HOSTAGE TO LIKELY FLOOR
AMENDMENTS SEEKING TO BLOCK ANY KOREA-RELATED LEGISLATION
AT THIS TIME. WE SAID WE HAD MADE NO FINAL ASSESSMENTS,
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PAGE 02 STATE 069170

BUT THAT SITUATION WAS VERY DIFFICULT.

2. AMBASSADOR KIM REPORTED ON HIS MEETING WITH SPEAKER
O'NEILL MARCH 10 (REFTEL). THERE HAD BEEN NO SUBSEQUENT
MEETING WITH ANY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE HOUSE ETHICS
COMMITTEE. THE AMBASSADOR AGAIN EMPHASIZED ROKG APPRE-
CIATION FOR OUR STANCE AND SAID THAT HE SAW NO PROSPECT

FOR ROKG TO ARRANGE FOR AMBASSADOR KIM'S TESTIMONY.

3. MR. HOLBROOKE REPORTED THAT HE HAD BEEN INFORMED BY JAWORSKI DEPUTY PETER WHITE THAT THE ETHICS COMMITTEE "HAS NO INTEREST IN EMBARRASSING PRESIDENT PARK IN ANY DISCUSSION OR TESTIMONY THAT THEY TAKE." WHILE HE THOUGHT AMBASSADOR SHOULD KNOW THIS, HE EMPHASIZED THAT NEITHER HE NOR ANYONE ELSE IN THE USG WOULD PLACE ANY PRESSURE EITHER INDIRECT OR DIRECT ON THE ROK ON THIS ISSUE. WE MEANT WHAT WE SAID ABOUT UPHOLDING INTERNATIONAL LAW ON THIS MATTER, BUT WE DO NOT CONTROL THE SITUATION IN THE CONGRESS.

4. IN FURTHER DISCUSSION, WE LEARNED THAT AMBASSADOR KIM WOULD WELCOME AN OPPORTUNITY TO TALK PRIVATELY WITH PETER WHITE PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FOR SEOUL. WITH HIS PERMISSION WE MANAGED TO ARRANGE A MEETING SHORTLY THEREAFTER IN THE DEPARTMENT. WHITE MET PRIVATELY WITH THE AMBASSADOR AND COUNSELOR PARK. THERE WERE NO DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL PRESENT.

5. FOLLOWING THE MEETING, AMBASSADOR KIM SAID HE FOUND THE DISCUSSION MOST USEFUL, BUT THAT HE WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC THAT ANYTHING COULD BE WORKED OUT. SEPARATELY, PETER WHITE INFORMED US THAT HE ALSO FELT CONVERSATION WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 STATE 069170

VERY USEFUL ALTHOUGH NO POSITIONS WERE CHANGED. WHITE EXPRESSED CONCERN, HOWEVER, OVER NEGATIVE EFFECT OF MARCH 15 FRASER SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING ON THE ETHICS COMMITTEE'S EFFORTS, SINCE FRASER ATTEMPT TO DRAW LINKAGE BETWEEN PRESIDENT PARK AND THE LOBBYING CAMPAIGN WOULD ONLY MAKE ROKG LESS COOPERATIVE. ASSUME YOU WILL BE GIVING US ROK REACTION TO FRASER HEARINGS AS IT DEVELOPS THERE. VANCE

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